



## **SBE Meeting Highlights**

### **A summary of key actions by the California State Board of Education May 2003**

#### **Exit Exam: HumRRO independent evaluation released**

An independent evaluation of the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) has found that the exit exam is valid and meets all nationally recognized test standards for use as a graduation requirement. The study by the Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) also found that the exam has motivated schools and students to focus on academic achievement and mastery of rigorous state academic content standards. Academic content standards in English-Language Arts and Mathematics were adopted in 1997 and have been integrated into curriculum and textbooks over the past four years.

The independent evaluation was mandated by AB 1609 (2001). Under AB 1609, the State Board of Education has the authority to delay the exit exam as a graduation requirement for the class of 2004 after reviewing the findings of the independent evaluation, which was due May 1. The State Board will review additional data at its June meeting, and a decision on whether to delay the exam as a graduation requirement for the class of 2004 is anticipated at the State Board's July monthly meeting. Initial passing rates for the Class of 2005 (those who tested in March 2003) will be available by June.

The five major findings of the HumRRO study, along with some of the key details, are as follows:

#### ***General Finding 1: The development of the CAHSEE meets all of the test standards for use as a graduation requirement.***

- Among issues for further discussion, HumRRO found that the State Board must decide, based on HumRRO's report and other information, whether students have had adequate opportunity to learn the material covered by the exit exam.

#### ***General Finding 2. The CAHSEE requirement has been a major factor leading to (a) dramatically increased coverage of the California Content Standards at both the high school and middle school levels and (b) development or improvement of courses providing help for students who have difficulty mastering these standards.***

- Coverage of the California Content Standards has increased significantly since 1999 at the high school *and* middle school levels.
- New textbooks, offering more complete coverage of the California content standards, have been adopted in the last two years. And new courses have been introduced in the high schools to provide additional opportunities for students who did not master the required standards in earlier grades.

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***General Finding 3. Available evidence indicates that many courses of initial instruction and remedial courses have only limited effectiveness in helping students master the required standards.***

- Through January 2003, cumulative passing rates have risen to 81 percent for English-language arts and 62 percent for mathematics, up about 10 percentage points from July 2002. HumRRO noted, however, that passing rates in mathematics are “still very low” for English learners, 37 percent, and for special education students, 22 percent.
- All schools reporting high levels of content coverage for three years or more had high passing rates (above 75%) for both English-language arts and mathematics. Passing rates for mathematics averaged only 22 percent for schools that had not yet implemented instruction closely aligned with the content standards.

***General Finding 4. Lack of prerequisite skills may prevent many students from receiving the benefits of courses that provide instruction in relevant content standards. Inadequate student motivation and lack of strong parental support may also play a contributing role in limiting the effectiveness of these courses.***

- More than half the teachers of supplemental and remedial courses reported that most of their students did not yet have prerequisite skills; for courses targeting special education students, 72 percent of the teachers gave this response.
- In interviews, teachers expressed concern with student motivation and attendance; many principals reported that fewer than 25 percent of students who had not passed the CAHSEE participated in available 2002 summer courses.
- Teacher credentials and experience were not a concern for most courses, although 22% of the math courses targeting special education students had teachers without appropriate credentials. Most teachers of courses targeting special populations had considerable experience with these populations.

***General Finding 5. Many factors suggest that the effectiveness of standards-based instruction will improve for each succeeding class after the Class of 2004, but the speed with which passing rates will improve is currently unknown.***

- The Class of 2006 was in 7th grade when the CAHSEE blueprints were adopted and also when standards-aligned textbooks for mathematics were identified.
- Middle school principals report dramatic increases in the proportion of 8th graders taking some algebra.
- Students in the Class of 2004 will have three or four more opportunities to take the CAHSEE, but 25 percent or more will not pass without dramatic intervention.

The HumRRO study can be found online at:  
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/statetests/cahsee/eval/eval.htm>

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### **Language proficiency for English learners defined**

The State Board approved a California Department of Education staff recommendation for the definition of English language proficiency that will be used in determining whether a local education agency has met the annual improvement goals for English learners under the Title III provisions of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

The State Board's approved definition is the same as the performance level that an English learner must achieve to attain proficiency on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). On the CELDT, a student is considered to be proficient in the English language if he or she attains an overall score at the "early advanced level," with each of the individual skill scores in reading, writing, listening and speaking at the "intermediate level" or above.

The State Board adopted the definition as part of the state plan to develop and submit annual goals -- technically known as "annual measurable achievement objectives"-- for the percentage of English learners expected to attain proficiency in English each year, as mandated by NCLB.

These annual measurable goals must be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) by September 1, 2003.

Meanwhile, the CDE recently received clarification from the USDE that the state responsibilities under Title III are to hold local education agencies (LEAs) accountable for meeting the annual measurable goals, not individual schools, as was done in Title I. LEAs are to hold individual schools accountable.

CDE will report each LEA receiving Title III funds, indicating whether it has met the annual measurable goals.

### **Proposed regs for charter schools adopted**

The State Board adopted regulations regarding claims for average daily attendance for pupils over the age of 19 by charter schools and charter granting entities. The regulations will become operative beginning in 2004-05.

The regulations state that beginning in 2004-05, a pupil who is over the age of 19 years may generate attendance for apportionment purposes in a charter school only if both of the following conditions are met: 1) the pupil was enrolled in a public school in pursuit of a high school diploma (or, if a student in special education, an individualized education program) while 19 years of age and, without a break in public school enrollment since that time, is enrolled in the charter school and is making satisfactory progress towards award of a high school diploma; and 2) the pupil is not over the age of 22 years.

Separately, the State Board sent out for public comment proposed permanent regulations relating to annual financial reporting for all K-12 Local Educational Agencies, including charter schools, as required by Assembly Bill 1994.

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Key provisions of the proposed regulations include:

- Every county office of education, school district, charter school, and educational joint powers agency (apart from exceptions outlined in existing state statute), shall submit an annual statement of receipts and expenditures in the format of the standardized account code structure. The form(s) for the annual statement shall be adopted by the State Board of Education and may be periodically revised (without separate approval of the State Board of Education) by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to the extent necessary to accommodate changes in statute or generally accepted accounting principles for government agencies.
- Charter schools have the option of reporting their annual financial statements using an alternative form adopted by the State Board of Education. The alternative form may be periodically revised (without separate approval of the State Board of Education) by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to the extent necessary to accommodate changes in statute or generally accepted accounting principles for government agencies. The alternative form shall be structured for electronic submission of data. In addition, the reporting of financial data by charter schools that are established as non- governmental accounting entities shall reflect the definitions, and to the extent necessary for accurate financial reporting, the guidance provided in the California School Accounting Manual, except for accounting differences required due to their nonprofit status.
- The California School Accounting Manual adopted by the State Board of Education pursuant to Education Code Section 41010 shall incorporate a standardized account code structure which is a statewide, uniform financial reporting format (based on the definitions and comprehensive chart of accounts set forth in the California School Accounting Manual). The structure shall be designed to provide a flexible statewide accounting system for local educational agencies to use in budgeting and reporting their revenues and expenditures. The structure shall accommodate local, state, and federal reporting needs as determined by the State Board.

Following a public 45-day review period, a public hearing will be conducted by staff with an audiotape of the proceeding and a staff-prepared summary of any comments presented at the public hearing being made available to the State Board members prior to the September 2003 meeting.

### **Golden State Seal of Merit Diploma for class of 2003**

The State Board approved requests by numerous school districts to waive *Education Code* Section 51451, regarding the method of qualifying high school seniors in the class of 2003 for a Golden State Seal Merit Diploma.

The normal process of demonstrating mastery is for students to have earned achievement levels of recognition, honors, or high honors on six Golden State Examinations, including the following: U.S. history; reading/literature or written composition; a mathematics exam; a science exam; and two other exams of the student's choice.

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Due to cancellation of the spring administration of the Golden State Examinations (GSEs) as a part of the current year budget cuts, many seniors are only part way to completing this requirement.

To be eligible for the 2003 Golden State Diploma under the waiver process, seniors must:

- be receiving a high school diploma from their district;
- have earned achievement levels of 4 (recognition), 5 (honors), or 6 (high honors) on four or more of the six required Golden State Examinations;
- be enrolled in a high school in a district that has been granted a waiver by the State Board to use up to two of the following 2002 California Standards Tests scores (no lower than a 350 scale score) in lieu of GSE results to complete the six subject-area requirement: Grade 11 English-Language Arts; Grade 11 History/Social Science (United States History); High School Mathematics; Algebra I; Algebra II; Geometry; Integrated Mathematics 1, 2, or 3; Biology; Chemistry; Physics; Earth Science.
- Districts have certified that all listed students meet the above requirements and have completed the legal requirements of a General Waiver Request.

### **Other Items of Interest**

**Regulations on Instructional Materials Adopted:** The State Board adopted regulations to implement the Instructional Materials Funding Realignment Program. Specifically, the regulations include technical revisions due to enactment of Senate Bill X1-18, legislation that allows school districts to use instructional materials adopted by the State Board AB 2519 in 1999 to meet the requirements for standards-aligned instructional materials in mathematics and reading/language arts for the 2002-03 and 2003-04 fiscal years.

For more information contact the State Board of Education  
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